



Montana Department of Transportation

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Helena MT 59620-1001

Jim Lynch, Director
Brian Schweitzer, Governor

April 12, 2007

Ravalli County Commissioners
215 S 4th Ave, Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840-2853

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Ravalli County Commissioners

Subject: Secondary Roads Program

Dear Commissioners:

A slide condition exists on Secondary Highway 473 (West Fork Road) in Ravalli County between Reference Post 0.25 to 0.5 just north of Conner. Because of this slide, Secondary Highway 473 is closed to thru travel and is currently not providing the service of a federal-aid highway.

MDT believes the highway should be reopened to public travel expeditiously, especially in light of the access it provides to public recreation lands, which will be a desired travel destination this summer. Because a time-sensitive construction solution is needed, MDT will seek approval from the Montana Transportation Commission to program Secondary Highway funds to reopen Secondary Highway 473 at the Commission's April 30 in Helena (agenda item attached). MDT will request approximately \$1.3 million in federal-aid and state money to accomplish this.

MDT is also submitting a Public Lands Highways Discretionary (PLHD) grant to the Federal Highway Administration for funding sufficient to cover the project costs. If the PLHD grant is approved, the funds will be obligated to the project and the Secondary Funds will be returned to the program. The addition of this Secondary project to the program should not impact any other Missoula District project in the program until 2011, at which time the Florence - East project in Ravalli County is anticipated to be delayed.

If you have any questions please contact Wayne Noem, MDT Secondary Roads Engineer, at 406-444-6109.

Sandra Straehl
Transportation Planning Administrator
Montana Department of Transportation

Attachment

copies: Jim Lynch, Director

Jim Currie, Deputy Director

Sandra S. Straehl, Administrator, Transportation Planning

Timothy W. Reardon, Chief Legal Counsel

Dwane Kailey, P.E., District Administrator, Missoula District

Wayne A. Noem, Secondary Roads Engineer

Secondary File

Agenda item:

Staff person handling: Sandra Strachl

Date/location: April 30, in Helena, MT

Item: **Secondary Roads Construction Program - Slide Condition**

Slide Condition - Secondary Highway 473 – North of Conner

Background

MDT staff requests commission approval for preliminary engineering and a construction project to correct a slide that has closed the West Fork Bitterroot Road (Secondary-473, at approximately reference point 0.5) north of Connor. Channel migration of the West Fork Bitterroot River and the resulting scour has undercut the roadway, which is currently sliding into the river. In addition, hillside springs on the west side of the road drain into the roadside ditch and have created saturated soils and slope instability. The slide has affected approximately 200 feet of highway.

This highway provides access to recreational lands and repair this construction season is time-sensitive so that travelers can access recreational destinations as soon as possible. MDT has evaluated the situation and believes an engineering solution exists to repair the roadway.

The highway is maintained by Ravalli County and is not Ravalli County's priority for the Secondary Roads Capital Construction Program. Further, the Missoula District Counties voted to not include this project in the Secondary Roads Capital Construction Program.

However, MDT believes that a time-sensitive slide correction is needed, which compels programming of a project to return this Secondary Highway to service for the benefit of the traveling public. At this time, MDT proposes using State Funded Construction (SFCS) funds for preliminary engineering only and Federal-aid Secondary Road Construction (STPS) funds for the remaining phases of the project.

Total estimated project cost is \$1,153,464 consisting of \$40,000 for preliminary engineering, \$100,000 for construction engineering, \$800,000 for construction, and \$100,000 for right of way and incidental costs including utilities. The project costs include \$113,464 of indirect costs.

Summary

MDT staff is requesting approval of a preliminary engineering phase in the amount of \$40,000 in State Funded Construction (SFCS) and \$1,113,464 in Secondary Road Construction (STPS) to address a slide condition on West Fork Road (S-473, R.P. 0.5). This action is needed to address the failure of the roadside embankment and bring Secondary Highway 473 back into service.

Staff recommendations

Staff recommends the Commission approve the addition of this project to the program.

Notes/discussion

Commission action